

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Integrated Regional Water Management Implementation Proposition 50, Chapter 8 IRWM Implementation Step 1

PIN: 6438
APPLICANT NAME: Santa Barbara County
PROJECT TITLE: Santa Barbara County IRWMP Implementation, Step 1

FUNDS REQUESTED: \$35,742,000
COST MATCH: \$ 4,349,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$40,091,000

DESCRIPTION: The Proposal consists of fourteen priority projects that will protect our region's communities in times of drought, protect and improve water quality, and improve the reliability of our water supply while decreasing dependence on imported water. Santa Barbara County is in the process of developing an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan to address multiple objectives including improved water supply reliability, flood control, water quality, and water supply security, groundwater management, and habitat restoration/preservation. These priorities are the result of multiple discussions and meetings with parties within the region concerned with improving the coordination of regional water management. Through a prioritization process further outlined in this proposal, a list of projects was developed that fits regional and statewide priorities and are ready to be implemented.

Question: Consistency with Minimum IRWM Standards - This evaluation will focus on whether the applicant has demonstrated that the IRWM Plan meets the minimum standards.

Pass

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Adopted IRWM Plan and Proof of Formal Adoption. Weighting factor is 1. 2

The applicant plans to have the IRWMP developed and adopted by the participating agencies by January 1, 2007.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Description of Region. Weighting factor is 1. 4

The applicant provided an Interim IRWMP for the region. The Interim IRWMP will be used until the IRWMP is formally adopted. The region is the County of Santa Barbara. Watersheds, groundwater basins, and water district boundaries are shown on the maps but rivers, lakes, supply canals, and land use information are not provided on the maps. The quantity, quality, and demands on water resources are briefly described. Ecological, economic, and cultural conditions and resources in the region are described.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Objectives. Weighting factor is 1. 3

The applicant addresses this criterion marginally. The final IRWMP has yet to be prepared. As part of the effort to finalize the IRWMP, the applicant will further refine regional objectives and develop an overview of water related conflicts and issues within the region. Therefore, the final objectives are not fully known yet.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Water Management Strategies and Integration. Weighting factor is 1. 2

Initial strategies are identified in the IRWMP. Water management strategies that are considered for the IRWMP are presented, but water management strategies that are not applicable to the IRWMP are not. There is no discussion on how chosen water management strategies create a synergistic effect. The integration of water management strategies is not discussed. Additional strategies will be developed and all the strategies will be integrated as the final IRWMP is prepared.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Priorities and Schedule. Weighting factor is 1. 2

Much of the criterion was not addressed in the IRWMP. Initial regional priorities and project concepts were developed in workshops starting in 2002. Priorities are based on criteria such as local area support, public health and safety, multiple organization benefits, habitat restoration, and water quality improvement. Regional priorities are broadly defined. Short- and long-term priorities (goals) and a process for modifying them will reportedly be prepared in the final IRWMP. Additional information will be developed on project implementation decision making processes and short- and long-term project priorities as the final IRWMP is prepared. The applicant did provide a long list of projects, encoded either "Current funding request", or "Not ready for funding." All current funding request projects are included in the proposal. The IRWMP does not address any of the decision making criterion questions.

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Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Implementation. Weighting factor is 1.

3

A list of proposed IRWMP implementation actions (mostly projects) and their schedules are provided in the IRWMP. Fourteen projects are applying for funding and the responsible entities for the projects are identified. Linkages between projects, feasibility of projects, and the institutional structure that will be used to implement the IRWMP will be developed in the final IRWMP. Interdependence of projects is not demonstrated in the IRWMP provided with the application. Additional projects may be proposed and the priorities of the current projects may be revised in the final IRWMP.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Impacts and Regional Benefits. Weighting factor is 1.

3

Most discussion of IRWMP implementation focuses on the benefits to be achieved, including direct benefits to three DACs. The only negative impacts mentioned are short-term impacts from project construction and those are not detailed. The IRWMP shows how local projects will work together to achieve collective regional benefits. The interregional project to increase groundwater storage and improve water quality in the Santa Maria groundwater basin will also benefit San Luis Obispo County, which contains the north half of the basin but is not included in this region. Coordination and possibility combining into a Santa Maria Basin IRWMP would integrate the Basin. There is not much discussion of other affected resources.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Technical Analysis and Plan Performance. Weighting factor is 1.

2

Water quality data sources are identified and will be used to develop the final IRWMP. Technical studies exist, but are not identified by name or by methods used, and their role in developing the water management strategies is not explained. No data gaps have been found so far, but will be evaluated as the final IRWMP is developed. Existing monitoring systems will be evaluated. Performance measures will not be developed until 2006.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Data Management. Weighting factor is 1.

3

The applicant's existing GIS based data management system will be used to manage the IRWMP related data. The applicant already disseminates existing data and their system for this will be expanded with an IRWMP webpage and mailing lists, etc. The relevance of the data to statewide needs is not identified, but State agencies will be supplied with IRWMP data. SWAMP and GAMA are not addressed. Water quality and quantity monitoring efforts are already underway and additional monitoring will be established where needed.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Financing. Weighting factor is 1.

2

Beneficiaries of the IRWMP are identified as all stakeholders in the region, without more details, and as the specific agency that will manage each projects. Financing for IRWMP implementation is described as coming from a variety of grant fund sources (e.g., Proposition 50, USBR, DFG Fisheries Program, Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project, and other unnamed grants). It does not appear that any of the local entities, ratepayers, or other local sources is contributing funding. O&M funding for each project would be requested as part of the grant funding requests for each project. Funding for O&M costs are not eligible costs.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Relation to Local Planning & Sustainability. Weighting factor is 1.

4

The IRWMP identified many existing local agency planning documents by name, but did not correlate them to specific IRWMP implementation actions or projects. Formal and comprehensive integration of local plans will be provided in the final IRWMP. The key local planning agency is the applicant. They plan to work with the other local planning agencies to integrate the local plans into the final IRWMP. The IRWMP is described as putting the local plans into a regional context, but not supplanting them.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Stakeholder Involvement & Coordination. Weighting factor is 1.

4

Most relevant stakeholders are identified and have been contacted or have directly participated in the initial water management planning discussions. A process is defined to involve the stakeholders in development of the final IRWMP and mechanisms to involve stakeholders in implementation of the IRWMP will be defined in the final IRWMP. Environmental justice concerns will be evaluated during final IRWMP development. The existing DACs are involved in the planning process. Many stakeholder groups have been identified. There is no discussion regarding obstacles to IRWMP implementation, possible obstacles to the IRWMP will be addressed in the final IRWMP. Two projects (Cachuma and Santa Maria River/Twitchell Dam) involve the key local, State, and federal agencies in current implementation activities and these cooperative relationships are expected to continue during implementation of the IRWMP.

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Question: Funding Match. This evaluation will focus on whether the applicant has demonstrated the ability to meet the minimum funding match or has requested a waiver or reduction in the funding match.

Pass

Question: Description of Proposal. Weighting factor is 3.

9

The proposal is to fund 14 projects. Its main water management elements are water supply reliability and groundwater recharge, with lesser focus on storm water capture, reclamation, and water and wastewater treatment. There is little documentation of scientific support for most of the proposals. Integration of some projects is shown to have multiple benefits. The water quality projects include discussions of water bodies, impairments, and the RWB Watershed Management Initiative Chapter and NPS management measures. Source water protection is described as a likely result of some projects. The environmental reviews needed for each project were identified, as was a schedule to achieve the needed compliance. Each of the projects will need to have its own metric of effectiveness developed, along with a plan to evaluate if it meets its original intention. Several existing water quality and water supply monitoring systems are listed.

Question: Project Prioritization. Weighting factor is 2.

6

A prioritized list of 23 projects is in the proposal and the same list is in the IRWMP. The proposal is to construct 14 of these projects; the remaining projects are either not ready to implement, are underway, or have been completed. The final IRWMP is expected to add more projects to the list and to reprioritize the expanded projects list, which appears to make this list of projects premature as the final list of projects for implementation. The 14 projects include higher and lower priority activities in the IRWMP and were selected because they are ready to proceed. Details of how and why specific projects are prioritized are not provided. More elaboration regarding the methodology behind project prioritization would result in a higher score for this criterion.

Question: Cost Estimate. Weighting factor is 1.

3

There is a basic task level budget for each of the 14 projects with a single dollar figure for each of the eight tasks (e.g., project administration, land purchase, construction/implementation, etc.). The funding match portion of each task is shown. Due to the lack of technical studies for each project, it is difficult to determine if the costs are reasonable.

Question: Schedule. Weighting factor is 1.

5

The schedule provided in the proposal is the same as the one in the IRWMP. In addition to providing schedules for the 14 projects of the proposal, it provides schedules for completion of the final IRWMP and for 9 projects not included in this funding proposal.

Question: Need. Weighting factor is 2.

6

The primary long-term regional need is for more water supplies to accommodate population growth. Negative impacts from not doing the projects are mainly described, as "our region will face a higher demand than our current supply can provide." Many of the 14 projects directly increase long-term water supplies. Economic and fiscal impacts are mostly related to future water supply needs. Environmental impacts are not discussed much. Some claimed environmental benefits are misleading. For example, the Lake Cachuma Water and Sewer Project claims to provide more lake water for fish, but fish will get the same amount of water whether the project is built or not since federal requirements already set minimum flows for the fish.

Question: Disadvantaged Communities. Weighting factor is 2.

10

Three projects will directly benefit 3, separate DACs. Out of a total grant request of \$35.7 million, the three DAC projects cost \$8.8 million. The total proposal match share is 10.8%. The claim is made that the three DACs are "unable to contribute" a match share. While there is no calculation regarding the percentage of DAC population relative to the regions total population, enough information is given that it can be calculate - it is 1.67%. The applicant is requesting a match waiver for just these three projects in the event the proposal is only partially funded.

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Question: Program Preferences. Weighting factor is 1.

3

Program priorities were only partially addressed. Much of the proposal goes towards improving water supply reliability with some water quality projects and to a lesser degree environmental and DAC components. The DAC of Casmalia has a project that directly protects its drinking water supply and the DAC of Guadalupe has a project that captures urban and agricultural runoff in a sedimentation basin. Some local water quality standards may be closer to achievement as a result of the wastewater treatment projects. Pollution into impaired waters may be reduced by some projects, but many regional water quality impairments are not significantly addressed by this proposal.

TOTAL SCORE: 76